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THE UNITARIAN

A MAGAZINE FOR FREE CHRISTIANS

ISUAL AIDS IN ELIGIOUS EDUCATION UPPETRY

Gordon L. Clarke

It is impossible to argue the case or puppetry as an educational iedium in this brief contribution to ie discussion of the value of visual ids in Sunday School work. urther, it is impossible to deal with ie practical aspects of the art ithin the limits of this article. owever, it is possible to give some eneral principles underlying the se of puppets as an interesting and xciting medium of religious educa- on.

There are types of puppets suit- ble for presentation to all age- roups, and puppet-forms within ie range of skills of each age-group from the primary to the senior departments. Through practical experience it can be stated that much time can be wasted, and often a puppet project can end in failure, because either the wrong type has been used or the wrong puppet construction attempted. All who are interested should read "The Puppet Book" edited by L. V. Wall, (Faber & Faber, 1950), which is the only available book on educational puppetry.

For general Sunday School work the glove puppet is the simplest and best form whether for use by the teacher as a direct method of teaching or by the children in presenting their own dramatised work after making the puppets. A grasp of a few fundamental principles of manipulation will provide a range of movement without the technical difficulties of more complicated puppet-forms, e.g. string or rod puppets.

As a group project puppetry calls upon the gifts and skills of the individual members of a School or class in a way which has no parallel in any other single activity. The modeller or carver, the dressmaker, the painter, the carpenter, the script writer, the "voices," and many others combine in this medium of instruction and expression. It explores the fascinating field of "background" as it requires a knowledge of racial characteristics, of costume for different countries and periods and so on.

Puppetry as a form of drama in religious education has an almost unlimited scope. In addition to Biblical material, there are many incidents in Christian history, in the lives of Great Christian teachers, in

the history and teaching of other world religions, in the lives of social reformers, and in the devotional classics, which are rich in dramatic possibilities.

To those who may be considering the use of puppets in their Schools this advice may be given—begin with simple puppet-forms, simple stages, simple settings, simple action. There is no need to worry about professional standards of craftsmanship at first as the imagination will endow the simplest puppet with life and reality. Further, if a group project is planned, the quicker the results are seen the better—skills will develop through interest as one production follows another.

The following books will give guidance and practical assistance:

Bible Puppetry (H. W. Whanslaw).

Marionettes and Rod Puppets (H. W. Whanslaw).

Simple Puppetry for Children (F. J. Serjeant).

Hand Puppets and String Puppets (Waldo S. Lanchester).

The Puppet Theatre Handbook (Marjorie Batchelor).

The Puppet Theatre (Jan Bussell).

THE FLANNELGRAPH

E. Basil Short

Although it may have some specialised uses for older scholars, the Flannelgraph is essentially a story-telling aid for use with younger chidren.

Briefly, the method is to use a fluffy surface on which to place figures, cut out, coloured and backed with material, introducing them as the story requires, moving their position as the plot develops, and aiming at a good tableau at the climax.

The best background is a neutral tinted sheet of flannelette. I use a fairly dark blue-grey pram blanket, which throws the figures into a good contrast. The figures, on thin card, are backed with a lightweight fluffy material—offcuts of pyjama material, surgical lint, etc.

Books of coloured figures have been published, but it is better to buy the uncoloured outlines, such as those of Elsie Anna Wood (National Society and S.P.C.K.) of which there are several volumes at 3s. each. Alternatively you could draw your own. Advice on colouring will be found in these books and will not be repeated here.

It should be recognised that, while this method introduces an element of visual realism into story telling, there are limitations. Thus it would require too much elaboration to provide a realistic background, and this is better not attempted at all. A perfectly plain background is better even than the simple two-piece cloth suggested by Elsie Anna Wood. Any *necessary* background items can be made like the figures and added as required.

It is when we come to the figures themselves that care needs to be taken. It is not sufficient simply to colour them in pleasing tones. Information is being given, and it ought therefore to be accurate. Before colouring Palestinian figures, find out what colours would be appropriate in the costume, male and female.

This is an aid to story-telling, not a substitute for it. A technique must be acquired, and no teacher should attempt to use the method in class without first practising it thoroughly. Equally, no teacher should use the method who has not first learnt how to tell stories. Good methods demand good teachers, for it is only the good teacher who can make proper use of the method.

Flannelgraph is great fun; so is teaching. But the important purposes of teaching must never be forgotten.

POSTAGE STAMPS

Albert Smith

The educational value of stamp-collecting is a fact all philatelists are agreed upon, whilst the field it covers in this respect is almost unlimited, ranging from specialising in the stamps of a single country to forming a collection of the world's stamps illustrating some particular subject like flowers, the Bible, saints, religion, railways, etc., and known as thematic collecting. Having tried it I believe that the use of stamps in Sunday School work can be of great value. Whilst it is not true by any means that stamp collecting is but the pastime of the juvenile yet the employment of stamps in teaching quite obviously appeals to a juvenile interest which is widespread so that there is no initial barrier to overcome in this approach.

There is in existence a small volume with the title, "Parables from Stamps," by the Rev. T. C. Innes, published by Pickering and Inglis at 3s. 6d. Although written from the orthodox Christian viewpoint it does suggest how stamps may be employed as visual aids. It is very useful in prompting one's own thoughts about this matter. The chapter dealing with the men responsible for the progress in the use of electricity is particularly good and the interpretation and application of Christian symbolism used in our own stamp designs are helpful and suggestive.

Possible subjects to be pursued might be that of nursing. Florence Nightingale's portrait is available on several foreign stamps; the Christian Cross and its connections with the various saints; the many saints themselves — St. Paul is featured on the Maltese stamps; the Story of the Bible and so forth. The stamps of the United States are a very rich source for gathering together a portrait gallery of American Unitarians, each notable in their different spheres—Presidents, writers, outstanding women, etc.

Since it is essential that the stamps so used shall be passed round the class for individual inspection care must be taken of course to preserve them being soiled. Further, mint, that is unused, stamps are to be preferred since the frank or cancellation mark, plus slogan, so often mars the stamp design and defeats the object in view. A piece of suitable cardboard could be employed on which to mount or hinge the stamps, the whole being securely protected by a completely enveloping piece of transparent glassine paper.

Perhaps an indispensable aid for the teacher is Stanley Gibbons "Simplified Stamp Catalogue" since it lists most issues of foreign countries and it is from these that on the whole the necessary material has come and continues to come. As with most visual aids in Sunday School work, imagination, inventiveness and a readiness to get down to preparation are required. But this particular approach has undoubted lasting effects and is well worth tackling, at least from time to time. And the avenues it opens up are both various and intriguing. Finally most stamp dealers will be found co-operative, and helpful in keeping the cost down to a minimum.

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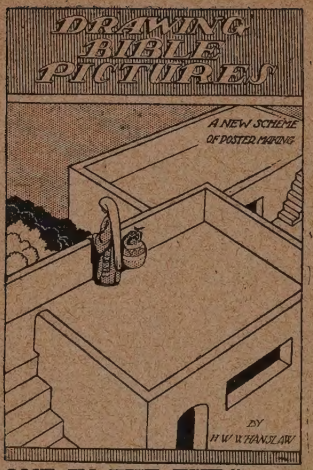

"ONE IN THE EYE"

Film Strips in Religion

Irvin Hodgson

The use of film strips in religious education can play a very important part, and has not been developed nearly enough. Its importance arises from "Seeing Experience" instead of "Hearing Experience." As Army instructors have it: "Better one in the eye than three in the ear!"

There are various methods of use. Film strips may be used to show lives and customs in foreign countries, or of the past; they may be used for propaganda purposes, to stress the needs or conditions of peoples at home or overseas, or to express ideas, etc. in public worship or services, though this field is still largely unexplored. Impressions gained through this medium are instantaneous, vivid, and lasting, and it is a useful tool in the hands of the teacher of either young or old.

Adequate preparation is essential. The pictures come on a roll of film, easily transportable and storable. It should be "run through" once or twice before the public performance, so that the lecturer may be familiar with the pictures and with the accompanying lecture notes. In the experience of the writer, one can rarely use lecture notes exactly as they stand, but prior study enables one to select appropriate passages, or even to rewrite some if necessary. Every care should be taken to avoid the stiffness of a read lecture.

One problem is the choice and cost of a suitable projector. Various types are available, depending on the amount of money you can afford, and the purpose you have in view. Always buy the best possible. A small, low-powered model is suitable for class work, and costs only a few pounds. Larger models, suitable for use in a hall, cost from about £30 upwards, depending on the power, quality of lens, etc. These latter models will also take 2 x 2 slides, which is an added advantage.

Film strips on a wide variety of subjects may be hired at a cost of 1s. 6d. per week from the REYD, and other libraries are also available. Or they may be purchased outright, from as little as 15s. upwards. If you have a collection of suitable pictures, you may even have your own film strip made at about 1s. 3d. per frame, or picture.

Sound film strips are a new development, made possible by the wider use of tape recorders. You can pre-record the lecture, either yourself or by an experienced speaker, leaving suitable gaps between the pictures, and background music, or even suitable sound effects can be introduced by any experienced tape recordist.

The use of film strips is an excellent supplement to the more orthodox methods, and one which should not be neglected by any up-to-date school which takes its work seriously. The REYD will be happy to advise.

OOR ABAHT T'SSEMBLY

By T'Tyke

At t'Annual Meetin', on t'Wensda' orin', t'retirin' president, Mr. nuter Ede, browt a varry busy ear to an end . . . an' reyt glad e've beean to hev him. This job t'President is turn an' turn abaht r t'lay-fowk an' t'parsons; soa is yeear it wor t'parsons chonce 1' we wor awl pleeased to seea Reverend Arthur Vallance don hain o' office. Ther' wor a bitna oit wi' t'pins but o' coarse men's ngers a' neearly awl thumbs when comes to addlin' pins.

T'new President telled us we wor arkin' to a varry taight time-table 1' gav' us awl a gooid example bi obbut takkin' hawf o' t'time gi'en him for his Address.

Maister Ronald Jones, telled us ah awl t'brass 'ed bin spent sin' ast meetings. Ther' wor summat uchin' abaht his shoart repoart, r it'll be t'last he'll hev to do. e's sarved ahr Unitarian Churches r monny a leng yeear, an' as a congition o' his sarvice we made m an honorary member o' Assembly. Ah'm sewer ther' must ev bin teears o' happiness in his eeart, if they worn't in his een, hen we awl stood up an' clapped m to t'echo.

T'Annual Repoat wor gi'en to us t'seckitary, t'Rev. John Kielty, ho also hed a few hooam-truths to y abaht t'state o' t'churches. Nah, ther's onybody in ahr movement can brast aht unpleeasant truths sweel es Maister Kielty . . . ah've ver met him. Mind yo', he's noa essimist; it's nobbut just thet he eas what's wreng mooar cleearly ian mooast an' maks it knawn in nooap that we'll do summat abaht

T'main part o' t'afternooin's usiness wor t'resolutions. T'fust, ssed for mooar pay for t'parsons, 1' t'second wor passed bi Assembly, but they're bahn to olk like cats in mony a church rustees' pigeon-coit in t'next few months. Ther' wor anither resolution abaht buildin' church skooils wi' brass fra t'goverment, but this wor tawked aht wi' es nice o' bit o' parlimentary callifuddgin' es ah've seen in months.

We mun knock on nah, for ah've abaht ewsed up awl mi space. But ah mun mak mention o' tCivic Reception. By gum, they did us prahd. T'Lord Mayor telled us hah her fowks hed bin Unitarian an' thet made us feel gooid. Its just es weel ther's a glimmer o' Unitarian leet glowin' in t'Augeean Stables o' public life.

I'mixed company it dussn't matter if th'art woman, parson or lay-man . . . tha tawks tu mich; soa, on t'Thursda' they awl hev ther' awn meetin's an' iverybody es t'chonce o' airin' the'r oratory baht ony recriminations. An' t'same neet t'yongsters hed a goa. They telled us varry forcibly, just what wor wreng; and they telled us tu what they thowt wod bi reight. T'only thing they forgate to tell us wor ah we wor bahn to gate fro' one to t'other. Which wor just as weel becos fowk allus fraitch ower blue-prints.

To raand things off, on t'Frida' marning we gate tegither an' telled each ither ah we owt to do mooar soocial sarvice, which wor varry fine an' ewsful in its way.

Ther's wor one thing abaht theese meetin's at wor varry plain to seea . . . thet is . . . we're nooan deead yet. An' we s'all not dee nawther if we nobbut pull ahr socks up an' do t'jobs at want dooin'. Hes t'iver thowt ah mich better an' easier it wod bi if ivery Unitarian did one job a week for his chappill. It maks yo' think. A weel, ah'll bi seein' thi.

HOLIDAYS

By T. J. Jones

It was a Unitarian, Charles Lamb, who once exclaimed: "Who first invented work, and bound the free and holidaying spirit down?" Lamb was guilty of many whimsicalities . . . delightful whimsicalities, in the main; but of them all, perhaps this

is the "whimsicaliest." For as a good Unitarian, he must have known that work was not the "invention" of an angry God as a penalty for sin (as in Genesis), but a divine "dispensation" for the true development of man.

Yet, there is a definite place for holidaying; and we are glad when the time for holidaying comes around again, as now. We are glad, also to realise that many more people are given the opportunity of holidays . . . and holidays with pay, too. The argument for a holiday has never been better put than by another essayist (also somewhat whimsical) nearer to our own day. Dr. W. Barton (otherwise, Safed the Sage) said, "What the hole is to the doughnut, so is the vacation unto the toil of the year; and there be many men half-baked or overdone because they know it not." Jesus knew the necessity for it when he said to his disciples: "Come ye apart for awhile."

We, therefore, quite rightly and sincerely, wish all our friends "Good Holidaying" . . . if not always "with pay," certainly "with profit." May they all return refreshed, and ready for more work!

But here I would like to put in a word about one aspect of holidaying that seems to need some stressing; and I speak as a minister of a church in a holiday resort. What is this nonsense about not going to church-worship on holiday? Some (too many), there be who think that there is need for holiday from this, too. Surely, worship is not work. It is meant to be a weekly "holiday" (holyday) from work. And not even Charles Lamb could perpetrate the whimsicality (really an absurdity) of talking about "taking a holiday from holidays."

CHILDREN'S CORNER

Hucklow in July

Raymond was halfway up the Tor and halfway up a tree. He knew he should not have been there, of course—they had all been warned but he and the others were playi a game of "hide and seek." T others were Lisbeth, Albert, Sa two girls called Pam and Penn and a boy from another sch known, for some odd reason Lefty. At least, it seemed odd u til they discovered that his s name was Wright . . .

But to get back—the others h all, in their turn, been "hide They had been sought out in r sonable time and with much no from behind bushes, tree trunks a hedges. Raymond was the l "hider." The others had been se ing him for a considerable time the keenness was wearing Besides, it was nearly lunch-time

"Raymond, where are yo called Lisbeth at last, "Come you've beaten us." Then they shouted together, but Raymond not reply.

"Where do you think he's gon asked Sam.

"I wonder if he's gone up to gliding-field," said Pam, or perh Penny. Lisbeth was indignant,

"I thought he'd do this," said, "he's just being awkwa She called for the last time—

"We're going for lunch now, mond, you'll have to follow."

"I've beaten them!" y Raymond from half-way the tree under which they been standing. "Hooray!" made him careless, and he gan to come down hurriedly— all, it was lunch-time! But slipped, grabbed frantically at nearest branch, and then hea dreadful ripping round! He fi arrived at the Dining Hall lunch was over, trying to hi large tear in his trousers. H ported to Mr. Jones and what gentleman said Raymond was heard to repeat. He did tell beth, however, that he had le his lesson. But, then, Ray being Raymond — what do think?

WS AND VIEWS

HOME CHURCHES

he President of the G.A. ressed the A.G.M. of the thern Unitarian Association at GWOOD, on April 28th. His ress was "The Nonconformist ıscience To-day."

s a result of the "April Shower" FLOWERY FIELD, HYDE, a cheque £184 was forwarded to the istie Hospital and Radium titute Women's Trust Fund to be cated to Cancer Research.

'he PEACE FELLOWSHIP'S LENT peal for the Save the Children nd has so far raised £325, and re to come, a large increase on year.

'he Dramatic Group at PORTS-UTH raised eight guineas for the fugee Appeal Year Fund with a duction of "The Lonely Road."

Revue by the Dramatic Society URMSTON gave considerable enjoy-nt to a number of specially ited Old Age Pensioners.

'he Free Churches held their Old oples' Service in the Unitarian urch at the end of SWINTON'S l Peoples' Week. Rev. T. Nuttall, tional President of the Old Age nsioners' Association was the eacher and the Mayor of Swinton ıd the lesson.

United Sunday School Services re held in Manchester and Liver-ol on June 7th. The former was nducted by the Rev. W. Hill-areing at PENDELTON, and the tter by the Rev. E. Basil Short at OPE STREET. The BURY district ld its annual service at STAND on e same day.

The President of the G.A. spoke "The Essentials of Religion" to e Ulster District Women's League June 13th. The next day Mr. alliance conducted Church Anni-rsary Services at BELFAST.

ISLINGTON now possesses an elec-onic organ — within one year of pening the Organ Fund and six onths of the opening of the new uilding.

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The Sunday School Express is now part of the ILFORD Calendar. Editor, Assistant Editor, Diarist and Art Editor are all children. A recent issue reported that the Sunday School won five trophies at the London Unitarian Sunday School Society Spring Festival.

UNITARIANS IN THE NEWS

Mr. John Holt, of STOCKPORT, has been elected President of the Oxford University Athletic Club.

The ILFORD Recorder reports that the Rev. Ernest George Green has retired from teaching for the second time. Mr. Green is 75. He began his career at the age of 14 as a student teacher: there were 70 pupils in his first class.

AUCKLAND, N.Z.

One of the children's contributions to the Church's Monthly News and Views: Malcolm (6). It is about ship. Little ship started to sink. Little ship said help, help, help, and in he went. He said to himself I am sad said the little ship.

THE CENTRAL POSTAL MISSION

The Annual Meeting took place on the traditional day of the Thursday in Whit week. This year has marked changes in the Press advertising part of the work, but relative continuity in the Suffolk Village Mission part. For, the Press advertising is now done by the G.A. Publicity Department.

But the Suffolk Village Mission has gone on more or less as usual, under the conscientious spiritual leadership of the Rev. W. Broadbent. What change there has been is seen in a growing sense of local responsibility coupled with a closer relationship to the Eastern Union, instead of the former referring of even small matters to the C.P.M.

Mr. Broadbent and Mr. F. S. Brent attended the meeting and described the place which Unitarianism has in their rural area. One point they made was that, even in a country district, social activities do not attract as they once did, now that entertainment

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